

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns in a dark green color, framing the central text.

GUZ 29 Joel

*Bible Commentary:
David Guzik TEV - XXIX*

David Guzik

David Guziks' Commentary On
29 Joel
Biblical Text – TEV (Good News Bible)

Joe 1:1 This is the LORD's message to Joel son of Pethuel.

An Invasion of Locusts

Joe 1:2 Pay attention, you older people; everyone in Judah, listen. Has anything like this ever happened in your time or the time of your ancestors?

Joe 1:3 Tell your children about it; they will tell their children, who in turn will tell the next generation.

Joe 1:4 Swarm after swarm of locusts settled on the crops; what one swarm left, the next swarm devoured.

Joe 1:5 Wake up and weep, you drunkards; cry, you wine-drinkers; the grapes for making new wine have been destroyed.

Joe 1:6 An army of locusts has attacked our land; they are powerful and too many to count; their teeth are as sharp as those of a lion.

Joe 1:7 They have destroyed our grapevines and chewed up our fig trees. They have stripped off the bark, till the branches are white.

Joe 1:8 Cry, you people, like a young woman who mourns the death of the man she was going to marry.

Joe 1:9 There is no grain or wine to offer in the Temple; the priests mourn because they have no offerings for the LORD.

Joe 1:10 The fields are bare; the ground mourns because the grain is destroyed, the grapes are dried up, and the olive trees are withered.

Joe 1:11 Grieve, you farmers; cry, you that take care of the vineyards, because the wheat, the barley, yes all the

crops are destroyed.

Joe 1:12 The grapevines and fig trees have withered; all the fruit trees have wilted and died. The joy of the people is gone.

A Call to Repentance

Joe 1:13 Put on sackcloth and weep, you priests who serve at the altar! Go into the Temple and mourn all night! There is no grain or wine to offer your God.

Joe 1:14 Give orders for a fast; call an assembly! Gather the leaders and all the people of Judah into the Temple of the LORD your God and cry out to him!

Joe 1:15 The day of the LORD is near, the day when the Almighty brings destruction. What terror that day will bring!

Joe 1:16 We look on helpless as our crops are destroyed. There is no joy in the Temple of our God.

Joe 1:17 The seeds die in the dry earth. There is no grain to be stored, and so the empty granaries are in ruins.

Joe 1:18 The cattle are bellowing in distress because there is no pasture for them; the flocks of sheep also suffer.

Joe 1:19 I cry out to you, LORD, because the pastures and trees are dried up, as though a fire had burned them.

Joe 1:20 Even the wild animals cry out to you because the streams have become dry.

Joel 1:1-20

Joel 1 – The Day of the LORD Brings Judah Low

A. Locusts devastate the land of Judah.

1. (1-4) The remarkable plague of locusts upon Judah.

The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.

**Hear this, you elders,
And give ear, all you inhabitants of the land!**

**Has *anything like* this happened in your days,
Or even in the days of your fathers?
Tell your children about it,
Let your children *tell* their children,
And their children another generation.
What the chewing locust left,
The swarming locust has eaten;
What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust
has eaten;
And what the crawling locust left, the consuming
locust has eaten.**

a. **The word of the LORD that came to Joel:** The prophet Joel spoke to the southern kingdom of Judah without making reference to the northern kingdom of Israel. It's hard know his exact time, because Joel doesn't mention any other kings or prophets. Many scholars date the book of Joel to 835 B.C.

i. This makes Joel a *pre-exilic* prophet, who served before the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel (721 B.C.) and the southern kingdom of Judah (586 B.C.). Other pre-exilic prophets include Obadiah, Jonah, Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, and Micah. Joel is one of the earliest prophets – only Obadiah prophesied before his time (845 B.C.).

ii. 835 B.C. was a time of turmoil and transition in Judah, at the end of the reign of the Queen Mother Athaliah and the beginning of the reign of King Joash. Athaliah seized power at the sudden death in battle of her son Ahaziah, who only reigned one year (2Ki 8:26, 2Ki 11:1). Athaliah killed all her son's heirs, except for one who was hidden in the temple and escaped - one-year-old Joash (2Ki 11:3). Her six-year reign of terror ended in 835 B.C. when the

High Priest Jehoiada overthrew Athaliah and set the seven-year-old Joash on the throne (2Ki 11:4-21).

iii. During her six years as queen over Judah, Athaliah reigned wickedly. She was the granddaughter of the ungodly King Omri of Israel – making her daughter or niece to Ahab, one of Israel's worst kings (2Ki 8:26). Athaliah raised her son Ahaziah to reign in the wicked pattern of Ahab, and even brought in Ahab's counselors to advise him (2Ch 22:2-4). When Ahaziah was killed in battle Athaliah seized power and set her other sons to do evil, even desecrating the temple and its sacred things (2Ch 24:7).

iv. If we are accurate in thinking that Joel prophesied in 835 B.C. then the judgment he described came toward the end of the six-year reign of ungodliness under Queen Athaliah. No wonder God brought a heavy hand on Judah!

v. "The name Joel means 'Jehovah is God' and therefore constitutes a short confession of faith, somewhat like the primary New Testament confession, 'Jesus is Lord.'" (Boice)

b. What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten: Joel was not announcing a coming judgment of the LORD. He describes their *present state* – devastated by successive swarms of locusts, first **chewing**, then **swarming**, then **crawling**, and finally **consuming**. Judah will experience a time of famine and financial ruin because of these locusts.

i. This plague was so unusual that Joel says, "**tell your children about it.**" The times were so remarkably difficult that parents would tell their children, "I lived through the plagues of locusts."

ii. In 1915 a devastating plague of locusts covered what is modern-day Israel and Syria. The first swarms came in March, in clouds so thick they blocked out the sun. The female locusts immediately began to lay eggs, 100 at a time. Witnesses say that in one square yard, there were as many as 65,000 to 75,000 eggs. In a few weeks they hatched, and the young locusts resembled large ants. They couldn't fly yet, and got along by hopping. They marched along 400 to 600 feet a day, devouring every speck of vegetation along the way. After two more stages of molting they became adults who could fly - and the devastation continued.

2. (5-7) *An army of locusts against Judah.*

**Awake, you drunkards, and weep;
And wail, all you drinkers of wine,
Because of the new wine,
For it has been cut off from your mouth.
For a nation has come up against My land,
Strong, and without number;
His teeth *are* the teeth of a lion,
And he has the fangs of a fierce lion.
He has laid waste My vine,
And ruined My fig tree;
He has stripped it bare and thrown *it* away;
Its branches are made white.**

a. **Awake, you drunkards:** Joel tells the **drunkards** to wake up and see the devastation the locusts caused. They came like a mighty **nation**, a fierce army against Judah.

b. **My vine... My fig tree:** God looks at the vines and fig trees of Judah and says they belong to Him, even in judgment.

3. (8-12) *Judah mourns because of the locusts' destruction.*

**Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth
For the husband of her youth.
The grain offering and the drink offering
Have been cut off from the house of the LORD;
The priests mourn, who minister to the LORD.
The field is wasted,
The land mourns;
For the grain is ruined,
The new wine is dried up,
The oil fails.
Be ashamed, you farmers,
Wail, you vinedressers,
For the wheat and the barley;
Because the harvest of the field has perished.
The vine has dried up,
And the fig tree has withered;
The pomegranate tree,
The palm tree also,
And the apple tree;
All the trees of the field are withered;
Surely joy has withered away from the sons of men.**

a. **Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth:** Joel told Judah that they should look at their condition and mourn, with all the emotion and passion of a young widow. They should not receive this plague of locusts stoically, with false bravado.

i. In this, Joel didn't minimize the suffering at all. He wasn't like the dentist who says, "This may cause a bit of discomfort" when he really means "This is going to hurt and I am going to make you suffer." He deals with the suffering in a real way and says, "Let's turn back to the LORD."

b. **The priests mourn... the land mourns... be ashamed, you farmers, wail, you vinedressers...**

surely joy has withered away: In vivid and poetic images, Joel shows how the whole nation mourns this great destruction brought by locusts.

i. **The grain and the drink offering have been cut off:** It's remarkable to see that these sacrifices to the LORD at the temple only stopped when there was no more grain or wine to give to God. Queen Athaliah's reign was wicked, but she allowed the temple ceremonies to continue. This shows us that the devil doesn't mind ceremonies in themselves, and that the devil is more interested in *corrupting* true religion than *eliminating* it.

B. Drought devastates the land of Judah.

1. (13-14) *A call to repentance.*

**Gird yourselves and lament, you priests;
Wail, you who minister before the altar;
Come, lie all night in sackcloth,
You who minister to my God;
For the grain offering and the drink offering
Are withheld from the house of your God.
Consecrate a fast,
Call a sacred assembly;
Gather the elders
And all the inhabitants of the land
Into the house of the LORD your God,
And cry out to the LORD.**

a. **Gird yourselves and lament, you priests:** Joel called the religious leaders to lead the nation in repentance. He told the priests to **gird yourselves** for repentance, the idea being "prepare to do the work of repentance."

i. Joel also told them *how* to do the work of repentance.

- **Consecrate a fast:** Make getting right with God so important that even eating isn't important
- **Call a sacred assembly:** Call for God's people to come together and repent
- **Gather the elders:** The leaders of the people should make a special point to be part of the work of repentance
- **Into the house of the LORD your God:** Come to the place where you *should* meet together with God
- **And cry out unto the LORD:** Finally, simply cry out to God and trust that He will respond in mercy

b. **For the grain offering and the drink offering are withheld from the house of your God:** When there was grain and wine to bring the people of Judah still brought offerings to the temple, either out of tradition or godly obedience. Now that there is no produce, there is no offering for **the house of your God**.

2. (15-20) *The day of the LORD against Judah in drought.*

Alas for the day!

For the day of the LORD *is* at hand;

It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.

Is not the food cut off before our eyes,

Joy and gladness from the house of our God?

The seed shrivels under the clods,

Storehouses are in shambles;

Barns are broken down,

For the grain has withered.

How the animals groan!

The herds of cattle are restless,

Because they have no pasture;

Even the flocks of sheep suffer punishment.

O LORD, to You I cry out;

For fire has devoured the open pastures,

**And a flame has burned all the trees of the field.
The beasts of the field also cry out to You,
For the water brooks are dried up,
And fire has devoured the open pastures.**

a. **For the day of the LORD is at hand:** The idea behind the phrase **the day of the LORD** is that this is *Gods'* time. Man has his "day," and the LORD has His **day**. In the ultimate sense, **the day of the LORD** is fulfilled when Jesus judges the earth and returns in glory. In a lesser sense, a time of judgment as Judah experienced with the locusts and drought is also an example of **the day of the LORD**.

b. **The seed shrivels... they have no pasture... the flocks of sheep suffer punishment... fire has devoured the open pastures... the water brooks are dried up:** Joel vividly described a devastating drought. It affected everything in Judah, and wildfires ravaged the dry land.

c. **O LORD, to You I cry out:** In this time of drought, all Judah could do was **cry out** to God. They were powerless to fix the drought problem. God sent them to a place where only heaven could help them, so they would look no other place.

i. In Luk 13:1-5 Jesus was confronted with the problem of a disaster that killed 18 people. Instead of acting as if it were just an accident of blind fate, Jesus used it as a wake-up call for repentance. Jesus showed that "Why did this disaster happen to them?" is the wrong question. The right question is "Am I ready to face such a disaster in this fallen world?"

The Day of the Lord

Joe 2:1 Blow the trumpet; sound the alarm on Zion, God's sacred hill. Tremble, people of Judah! The day of the LORD is

coming soon.

Joe 2:2 It will be a dark and gloomy day, a black and cloudy day. The great army of locusts advances like darkness spreading over the mountains. There has never been anything like it, and there never will be again.

Joe 2:3 Like fire they eat up the plants. In front of them the land is like the Garden of Eden, but behind them it is a barren desert. Nothing escapes them.

Joe 2:4 They look like horses; they run like war-horses.

Joe 2:5 As they leap on the tops of the mountains, they rattle like chariots; they crackle like dry grass on fire. They are lined up like a great army ready for battle.

Joe 2:6 As they approach, everyone is terrified; every face turns pale.

Joe 2:7 They attack like warriors; they climb the walls like soldiers. They all keep marching straight ahead and do not change direction

Joe 2:8 or get in each other's way. They swarm through defenses, and nothing can stop them.

Joe 2:9 They rush against the city; they run over the walls; they climb up the houses and go in through the windows like thieves.

Joe 2:10 The earth shakes as they advance; the sky trembles. The sun and the moon grow dark, and the stars no longer shine.

Joe 2:11 The LORD thunders commands to his army. The troops that obey him are many and mighty. How terrible is the day of the LORD! Who will survive it?

Return to the Lord

Joe 2:12 "But even now," says the LORD, "repent sincerely and return to me with fasting and weeping and mourning.

Joe 2:13 Let your broken heart show your sorrow; tearing your clothes is not enough." Come back to the LORD your

God. He is kind and full of mercy; he is patient and keeps his promise; he is always ready to forgive and not punish.

Joe 2:14 Perhaps the LORD your God will change his mind and bless you with abundant crops. Then you can offer him grain and wine.

Joe 2:15 Blow the trumpet on Mount Zion; give orders for a fast and call an assembly!

Joe 2:16 Gather the people together; prepare them for a sacred meeting; bring the old people; gather the children and the babies too. Even newly married couples must leave their homes and come.

Joe 2:17 The priests, serving the LORD between the altar and the entrance of the Temple, must weep and pray: "Have pity on your people, LORD. Do not let other nations despise us and mock us by saying, 'Where is your God?' "

The Lord Had Pity

Joe 2:18 Then the LORD showed concern for his land; he had mercy on his people.

Joe 2:19 He answered them: "Now I am going to give you grain and wine and olive oil, and you will be satisfied. Other nations will no longer despise you.

Joe 2:20 I will remove the locust army that came from the north and will drive some of them into the desert. Their front ranks will be driven into the Dead Sea, their rear ranks into the Mediterranean. Their dead bodies will stink. I will destroy them because of all they have done to you.

Joe 2:21 "Fields, don't be afraid, but be joyful and glad because of all the LORD has done for you.

Joe 2:22 Animals, don't be afraid. The pastures are green; the trees bear their fruit, and there are plenty of figs and grapes.

Joe 2:23 "Be glad, people of Zion, rejoice at what the LORD your God has done for you. He has given you the right

amount of autumn rain; he has poured down the winter rain for you and the spring rain as before.

Joe 2:24 The threshing places will be full of grain; the pits beside the presses will overflow with wine and olive oil.

Joe 2:25 I will give you back what you lost in the years when swarms of locusts ate your crops. It was I who sent this army against you.

Joe 2:26 Now you will have plenty to eat, and be satisfied. You will praise the LORD your God, who has done wonderful things for you. My people will never be despised again.

Joe 2:27 Then, Israel, you will know that I am among you and that I, the LORD, am your God and there is no other. My people will never be despised again.

The Lord Will Pour Out His Spirit

Joe 2:28 "Afterward I will pour out my Spirit on everyone: your sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your old people will have dreams, and your young people will see visions.

Joe 2:29 At that time I will pour out my Spirit even on servants, both men and women.

Joe 2:30 "I will give warnings of that day in the sky and on the earth; there will be bloodshed, fire, and clouds of smoke.

Joe 2:31 The sun will be darkened, and the moon will turn red as blood before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.

Joe 2:32 But all who ask the LORD for help will be saved. As the LORD has said, 'Some in Jerusalem will escape; those whom I choose will survive.' "

Joel 2:1-32

Joel 2 – The Day of the LORD and the Restoration of the LORD

A. A mighty army to invade Judah.

1. (1-5) What the mighty army looks like.

**Blow the trumpet in Zion,
And sound an alarm in My holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble;
For the day of the LORD is coming,
For it is at hand:
A day of darkness and gloominess,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
Like the morning *clouds* spread over the mountains.
A people *come*, great and strong,
The like of whom has never been;
Nor will there ever be any *such* after them,
Even for many successive generations.
A fire devours before them,
And behind them a flame burns;
The land *is* like the Garden of Eden before them,
And behind them a desolate wilderness;
Surely nothing shall escape them.
Their appearance is like the appearance of horses;
And like swift steeds, so they run.
With a noise like chariots
Over mountaintops they leap,
Like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the
stubble,
Like a strong people set in battle array.**

a. Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the LORD is coming, for it is at hand: In Joel 1, the prophet spoke of the judgment that *had arrived* in Judah (a plague of locusts and drought). In Joel 2, he begins by describing judgment that *will come* – a mighty army set against Judah. Since this is all part of “God’s day” not “man’s day,” it is described as **the day of the LORD**.

i. When we are right with God, we *want* **the day of the LORD**. We long for Him to show His strength because we know that we abide in Him. When we are not right with God, we *dread* **the day of the LORD**, because when God shows Himself strong, His strength may work *against* us. In Joel's day Judah was not right with God, so **the day of the LORD** would be nothing but **darkness and gloominess** to them.

b. **A people come, great and strong**: It's hard to know what invasion Joel predicted here. Probably Joel warned of an invasion that never happened because Judah responded to the invitation to repent and God held back this army. The 40-year godly reign of King Joash in Judah began soon after the time of Joel's prophecy.

i. There are some commentators who believe that Joel refers back to the army of locusts and describes them poetically. This is possible, but it seems best on balance to say that he wrote of a literal human army ready to come against an unrepentant Judah. Like an army of locusts, if they came they would be massive, destructive, and unstoppable.

c. **A fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns**: The urgent nature of this prophecy probably prompted Jehoiada to depose the wicked Queen Athaliah and set Joash on the throne, even though he was only seven years-old (2Ki 11:4-21). Perhaps Jehoiada would have waited until Joash was older, but Joel's prophecy showed him that it had to be done immediately.

2. (6-11) *What the mighty army will do.*

**Before them the people writhe in pain;
All faces are drained of color.
They run like mighty men,
They climb the wall like men of war;**

Every one marches in formation,
And they do not break ranks.
They do not push one another;
Every one marches in his own column.
Though they lunge between the weapons,
They are not cut down.
They run to and fro in the city,
They run on the wall;
They climb into the houses,
They enter at the windows like a thief.
The earth quakes before them,
The heavens tremble;
The sun and moon grow dark,
And the stars diminish their brightness.
The LORD gives voice before His army,
For His camp is very great;
For strong *is the One* who executes His word.
For the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible;
Who can endure it?

a. **They do not break ranks... everyone marches in his own column:** With a chilling poetic flair, Joel describes the discipline and effectiveness of this army. Because they keep ranks and work with energy (**they run to and fro in the city**) they bring a devastating attack on Judah.

i. If we consider the people of God to be like an army – perhaps based on the military images Paul sprinkled through his letters – then this passage shows us two things that can make God’s people more effective. First, they must *keep order*, with every soldier keeping ranks. Second, they must *work hard*, with every soldier serving with energy.

b. **The LORD gives voice before His army:** As impressive as this army is, Joel does not want Judah to

forget that it's real power lies in that God has sent them. They will be His tool of judgment against Judah – unless they repent.

i. When the plague of locusts and the drought devastated Judah, you might have thought that Joel would encourage the people. He might have said, "Hang in there! Things are bad, but they will get better. Tough times don't last, but tough people do." Instead Joel said, "You think that was bad? Worse is to come if we don't repent."

B. A promise of help to a repentant Judah.

1. (12-17) The prophet calls God's people to repent.

**"Now, therefore," says the LORD,
"Turn to Me with all your heart,
With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning."
So rend your heart, and not your garments;
Return to the LORD your God,
For He *is* gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger, and of great kindness;
And He relents from doing harm.
Who knows *if* He will turn and relent,
And leave a blessing behind Him;
A grain offering and a drink offering
For the LORD your God?
Blow the trumpet in Zion,
Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly;
Gather the people,
Sanctify the congregation,
Assemble the elders,
Gather the children and nursing babes;
Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber,
And the bride from her dressing room.
Let the priests, who minister to the LORD,
Weep between the porch and the altar;**

**Let them say, "Spare Your people, O LORD,
And do not give Your heritage to reproach,
That the nations should rule over them.
Why should they say among the peoples,
'Where *is* their God?'"**

a. **Now, therefore... Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning:** *Because* they heard the warning of judgment, God's people should repent. It's doesn't make their repentance less valid because they had to be scared into it. The important thing is that they turn back to the LORD in *sincerity*, and God tells them how.

i. Sincere repentance is to **turn to** God, and therefore *away from* our sin.

ii. Sincere repentance is done **with all your heart**, giving everything you can in surrender to God.

iii. Sincere repentance is marked by *action* (**with fasting**) and *emotion* (**with weeping... mourning**). Not every act of repentance will include **fasting** and **weeping**, but if *action* and *emotion* are absent, it isn't real repentance.

b. **Rend your heart, and not your garments:** One expression of mourning in Jewish culture was and is the tearing of the clothes. It was a way to say, "I am so overcome with grief that don't care if my clothes are ruined and I look bad." Joel knew that someone could tear their **garments** without tearing their **heart**, and he described the kind of heart-repentance that really pleases God.

i. Spurgeon tells the story of a woman who came seeming to be in great sorrow, saying what a great sinner she was, but Spurgeon suspected her repentance wasn't sincere. He said, "Well, if you are a

sinner of course you have broken God's laws. Let's read the Ten Commandments and see which ones you have broken." They started at the first: "You shall have no other gods before Me," and Spurgeon asked her if she ever broke that commandment. "Oh no," she said, "not that I know of." "You shall not make any graven image' – did you ever break that one?" "Never, sir," she answered. As you might suppose, Spurgeon went through all Ten Commandments and she could not find a single one that she had broken, and what he suspected was true. She didn't really consider herself a sinner, and she was making a show of repentance because she thought it was expected of her.

c. **Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm:** Knowing the goodness and mercy of God is another motive for true repentance. We come to Him confident that He will heal and forgive, and that He may relent from the judgment He announced.

i. We don't repent with the idea "God is so mean that if I don't return to Him, He will destroy me." Instead the idea is "God is so **gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness** that He will spare me from what I deserve if I turn back to Him." Ultimately, it is His goodness that leads us to repentance (Rom 2:4).

d. **Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, and the bride from her dressing room:** In addition to the same pattern of repentance he presented in Joe 1:14, Joel adds the ideas relevant to the **bridegroom** and the **bride**. The idea with these images is that in a time of repentance God's people cannot carry

on “as usual.” Usually the **bridegroom** belongs in **his chamber** and the **bride** belongs in **her dressing room**, but not now – it is time to repent. True repentance does not carry on with business as usual.

e. **Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar:** Leaders among God’s people must especially lead in repentance. They can’t come with the attitude that “the people” must repent. They must regard themselves as the people and the people as themselves and lead in repentance.

f. **Spare Your people, O LORD, and do not give Your heritage to reproach:** Joel puts a rich prayer of repentance into the mouths of God’s priests. It as if the priests should pray with the thought, “How can we persuade God to have mercy on us?”

i. **Spare:** This implies that God’s people deserve judgment, but they plead for mercy.

ii. **Your people:** This reminds God that they belong to Him and provides another motivation for mercy.

iii. **Do not give Your heritage to reproach:** This tells God that mercy unto His people will bring Him glory among the nations and that judgment may bring His name into discredit.

2. (18-20) God promises to defend His repentant people against the mighty army.

**Then the LORD will be zealous for His land,
And pity His people.**

**The LORD will answer and say to His people,
“Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil,
And you will be satisfied by them;
I will no longer make you a reproach among the
nations.**

But I will remove far from you the northern *army*,

**And will drive him away into a barren and desolate land,
With his face toward the eastern sea
And his back toward the western sea;
His stench will come up,
And his foul odor will rise,
Because he has done monstrous things."**

a. **Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, and pity His people:** Judah could know that when God's people sincerely repent, He notices from heaven. His zeal and pity are then turned *for* His people.

b. **I will send you grain and new wine and oil... I will remove far from you the northern army:** God promised to restore material prosperity to a repentant Judah, and to defeat the mighty army from the north. Because this mighty army had **done monstrous things**, God would turn the attention of His judgment away from His people and now against this mighty army.

3. (21-27) Confidence in God's promise of restoration.

**Fear not, O land;
Be glad and rejoice,
For the LORD has done marvelous things!
Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field;
For the open pastures are springing up,
And the tree bears its fruit;
The fig tree and the vine yield their strength.
Be glad then, you children of Zion,
And rejoice in the LORD your God;
For He has given you the former rain faithfully,
And He will cause the rain to come down for you;
The former rain,
And the latter rain in the first month.
The threshing floors shall be full of wheat,
And the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.**

**“So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten,
The crawling locust,
The consuming locust,
And the chewing locust,
My great army which I sent among you.
You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,
And praise the name of the LORD your God,
Who has dealt wondrously with you;
And My people shall never be put to shame.
Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel:
I am the LORD your God
And there is no other.
My people shall never be put to shame.”**

a. **Be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done marvelous things!** Joel looked forward to the restoration that God promised, and he told Judah to look forward in faith, and to praise God for the restoration He promised – even before they saw it with their own eyes.

b. **The open pastures are springing up, and the tree bears its fruit:** With the eye of faith, Joel could already see it happening. All around him were the lush, fruitful pastures and trees that God had restored after the destruction of the locusts.

c. **He has given you the former rain faithfully... and the latter rain in the first month:** At the end of Joel 1, the prophet saw the destruction drought brought. Now with the eye of faith he sees God restoring both the **former** and **latter** rain to Israel.

i. Ancient Israel had no irrigation system and relied on rain to water their crops. In a time of drought, nothing grew. God promises to restore both the **former rain** (falling in autumn) and the **latter rain**

(falling in spring). When God restores these rains, Judah will have full threshing floors and wine vats.

ii. This passage along with others (Deu 11:14, Hos 6:3) were taken to give the name of the "Latter Rain Movement" starting in 1948 by William Branham. Branham influenced a generation of Pentecostal preachers, including a young protégé named Oral Roberts. Marked by strange and aberrant doctrine and practices, the movement eventually faded from prominence and Branham himself died in a traffic collision with a drunk driver in 1965. He died on Christmas Eve, and his faithful followers believed that he would rise from the dead, so they delayed his burial for several days. But the influence of the Latter Rain movement lived on. The Latter Rain popularized many attitudes and doctrines popular in revival movements today:

- The "five-fold ministry" and "restoration of apostle and prophets."
- The "foundational truths" of Heb 6:1-2.
- An emphasis on signs and wonders as marks of true revival.
- A strong emphasis on unity.
- Replacement theology, replacing Israel with the church.
- Dominion theology, saying the church will conquer and rule the world.
- An elitist attitude, promoting the idea of a group of "super-christians."

iii. Many researchers - and many within these modern groups today - believe that many modern "revival" movements are really just a continuation of the Latter

Rain movement. Movements such as "Joel's Army," the Manifest Sons of God, the Dominion Movement, the Kansas City Prophets, the Toronto Blessing, the Pensacola Revival are connected in some way to the Latter Rain movement. For example, Paul Cain – later to re-emerge as head of the Kansas City Prophets in 1989 – traveled with William Branham and called him "the greatest prophet that ever lived."

d. I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten: God promised to **restore** what was taken away in chastisement. When the locusts did their work, it looked complete and final, but God promised that He could even restore **the years that the swarming locusts has eaten**.

i. "It will strike you at once that the locusts did not eat the years: the locusts ate the fruits of the years' labor, the harvests of the fields; so that the meaning of the restoration of the years must be the restoration of those fruits and of those harvests which the locusts consumed. You cannot have back your time; but there is a strange and wonderful way in which God can give back to you the wasted blessings, the unripened fruits of years over which you mourned. The fruits of wasted years may yet be yours." (Spurgeon)

4. (28-32) The ultimate restoration and the ultimate day of the LORD.

**"And it shall come to pass afterward
That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions.
And also on My menservants and on My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.**

And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth:

Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.

The sun shall be turned into darkness,

And the moon into blood,

Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.

And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD

Shall be saved.

For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance,

As the LORD has said,

Among the remnant whom the LORD calls.”

a. **It shall come to pass afterward:** After the restoration Joel spoke of previously in the chapter, there will come a time of ultimate restoration and blessing. This latter time will be marked by an outpouring of God’s **Spirit on all flesh** – not only selected men at selected times for selected duties.

i. The Old Testament has a rich record of the work of the Spirit, but He was not poured out **on all flesh** under the Old Covenant. Instead, certain men were filled with the Spirit at certain times and only for certain duties. It was rather selective:

- Joseph was filled with the Spirit of God (Gen 41:38).
- The craftsmen who built the tabernacle were filled with the Spirit of God (Exo 31:3).
- Joshua was filled with the Spirit of God (Num 27:18).
- The judge Othniel was filled with the Spirit of God (Jdg 3:10).

- The judge Gideon was filled with the Spirit of God (Jdg 6:34).
- The judge Jephthah was filled with the Spirit of God (Jdg 11:29).
- The judge Samson was filled with the Spirit of God (Jdg 13:5; Jdg 14:6; Jdg 14:19; Jdg 15:14).
- Saul was filled with the Spirit of God (1Sa 10:9-10).
- David was filled with the Spirit of God (1Sa 16:13).

ii. Here, Joel looked forward to the glorious New Covenant, when the Spirit of God would be poured out **on all flesh**. Why, even **your sons and daughters, your old men, and your young men** would be filled with the Spirit of God.

iii. This was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost when the disciples gathered in the upper room, waiting in Jerusalem for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised would come (Act 1:4-5). When the outpouring of the Spirit came, the 120 followers of Jesus were all filled with the Spirit and began to praise God in other tongues. Jerusalem was crowded at that time, because of the feast of Pentecost – so a crowd quickly gathered because of the commotion. Those who heard the disciples praise God in these miraculous languages began to mock them, claiming they were drunk. Peter stood up and boldly set the record straight: the disciples were not drunk at all, but this was a fulfillment of Joel's great prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit.

iv. At first, any Jew would scoff at the idea of 120 followers of a crucified man being filled with the Holy Spirit. Based on their understanding of the Old Testament they would think, "These 120 people are

not kings or prophets or priests; God only pours out His Spirit on special people for special duties. These are common folk, and God doesn't pour out His Spirit on them." Peter uses the prophecy of Joel to show them that things are different now, just as God said they would be. Now, the Holy Spirit is poured out upon all who believe and receive, even the common folk. Now God offered a New Covenant relationship, and part of the New Covenant was the outpouring of the Spirit for all who receive in faith.

v. Peter's sermon of the Day of Pentecost also shows us that there is *never* any disparity between the work of the Spirit and the work of the Word. When Peter was filled with the Spirit of God in the midst of miraculous signs and wonders as he had never experience before, what did he do? He said, "Let's open up our Bibles to the book of Joel." He had a Bible study, one that both *taught the 120 disciples* (they better understood their experience according to the Scriptures) and *called the lost* to salvation.

vi. We also notice that Peter's application was exactly the same as the application made by the Prophet Joel: *repent*. Joel said, "*Now, therefore,*" *says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the LORD your God (Joe 2:12-13)* Peter said, *Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Act 2:38)*

b. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants: In this latter time, all the servants of the LORD will be filled with His Spirit in this unique and powerful way. Under the New Covenant, every believer

can receive the full measure of the Spirit and be used in a special and wonderful way.

i. Sometimes the common churchgoer simply wants a building to worship in, a nice service that isn't too offensive, and a good sermon – after that he thinks, *leave me alone*. That isn't New Covenant Christianity, which sees the work of the ministry as belonging to the people, not the "clergy."

ii. Some people have taken this idea and run too far with it saying, "Therefore we don't need ministers or clergy. We believe in the priesthood of all believers, so there is no room for offices of any kind in the church." This ignores the clear teaching of Scripture, which says that the work of the ministry belongs to all the people of God, but the work of equipping the saints belongs to God-appointed offices and ministries (Eph 4:7-16). It is *because* the ministry belongs to all Christians that God has appointed offices and ministries to equip every saint to fulfill their role. Act 2:42-47 describes a wonderful fulfillment of this ideal.

c. I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: This time of great outpouring of the Spirit of God will culminate with cataclysmic signs in the heavens and **the great and awesome day of the LORD.**

i. On the Day of Pentecost, the prophecy of Joel was fulfilled, but not consummated. Peter rightly saw that this was a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God, given freely upon all who believe and receive as was promised in the New Covenant (Eze 11:19; Eze 36:24-28). The prophecy of Joel was also especially appropriate because the Day of Pentecost ushered in the last days - with history now moving

along the edge of the consummation of all things, not rushing towards it as a distant point.

d. **Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved:** This is another glorious promise associated with the time Joel said **shall come to pass afterward**. In this time of the poured-out Spirit of God, salvation will no longer be a matter of association with national Israel. Instead, **whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved** – no matter what nation they come from.

i. This is a broad call – **whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved**. “‘Ah!’ you say, ‘I wish my name was written down in the Bible.’ Would it comfort you at all? If it were written in the Scripture, ‘Charles Haddon Spurgeon shall be saved,’ I am afraid I should not get much comfort out of the promise, for I should go home, and fetch out the London Directory, and see if there was not another person of that name, or very like it. How much worse would it be for the Smiths and the Browns! No, my brethren, do not ask to see your name in the inspired volume; but be content with what you do see, namely, your character! When the Scripture says, ‘Whosoever,’ you cannot shut yourself out of that” (Spurgeon).

ii. This is a call to prayer – **whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved**. “You cannot perish praying; no one has ever done so. If you could perish praying, you would be a new wonder in the universe. A praying soul in hell is an utter impossibility. A man calling on God and rejected of God! – the supposition is not to be endured. ‘Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ God himself must lie, he must quit his nature, forfeit his claim to mercy, destroy his character of

love, if he were to let a poor sinner call upon his name, and yet refuse to hear him.” (Spurgeon)

iii. This is a call to come to the true God – **whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.** Coming to a false god, a god of your own imagination will do you no good. The god of your opinion does not exist and cannot save you. You must come to the God of the Bible. “The pity of it is that the most of people in these days worship a god of their own invention. They do not make an image of clay, or of gold, but they construct a deity in their minds according to their own thoughts. They proudly judge as to what God ought to be, and they will not receive God as he really is. What is this but a god-making as gross as that which is performed by the heathen? What can be more wicked than to attempt to imagine a better god than the one true and living God? As the deity of your fancy has no existence, I would not recommend you to trust in him.” (Spurgeon)

iv. This is a call to come to God intelligently – **whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.** “Now, by the word ‘name’ we understand the person, the character of the Lord. The more, then, you know about the Lord, and the better you know his name, the more intelligently will you call upon that name. If you know his power, you will call upon that power to help you. If you know his mercy, you will call upon him in his grace to save you. If you know his wisdom, you feel that he knows your difficulties, and can help you through them.” (Spurgeon)

v. This is a certain promise – **whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.** It is a profound mystery why all do not receive this great invitation, but the text itself tells us that only a remnant

receives it (**among the remnant whom the LORD calls**). Yet all who do come are certainly saved. "Suppose we, who trust alone in Jesus, should perish, what then? Why, it would be to the everlasting dishonor of the Lord in whom we trusted. We should lose our souls certainly, but he would lose his honor. Think of one of us being able to say in hell, 'I trusted in the boasted Savior's aid, and rested myself on God, and yet I am lost.' Sirs, heaven itself would be darkened, and the crown jewels of God would lose their lustre, if that could once be the case! But it cannot be. If you trust in the Lord God Almighty, he will save you as surely as he is God." (Spurgeon)

The Lord Judges the Nations

Joe 3:1 The LORD says, "At that time I will restore the prosperity of Judah and Jerusalem.

Joe 3:2 I will gather all the nations and bring them to the Valley of Judgment. There I will judge them for all they have done to my people. They have scattered the Israelites in foreign countries and divided Israel, my land.

Joe 3:3 They threw dice to decide who would get the captives. They sold boys and girls into slavery to pay for prostitutes and wine.

Joe 3:4 "What are you trying to do to me, Tyre, Sidon, and all of Philistia? Are you trying to pay me back for something? If you are, I will quickly pay you back!

Joe 3:5 You have taken my silver and gold and carried my rich treasures into your temples.

Joe 3:6 You have taken the people of Judah and Jerusalem far from their own country and sold them to the Greeks.

Joe 3:7 Now I am going to bring them out of the places to which you have sold them. I will do to you what you have done to them.

Joe 3:8 I will let your sons and daughters be sold to the people of Judah; they will sell them to the far-off Sabeans. I, the LORD, have spoken.

Joe 3:9 "Make this announcement among the nations: 'Prepare for war; call your warriors; gather all your soldiers and march!

Joe 3:10 Hammer the points of your plows into swords and your pruning knives into spears. Even the weak must fight.

Joe 3:11 Hurry and come, all you surrounding nations, and gather in the valley.' " Send down, O LORD, your army to attack them!

Joe 3:12 "The nations must get ready and come to the Valley of Judgment. There I, the LORD, will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.

Joe 3:13 They are very wicked; cut them down like grain at harvest time; crush them as grapes are crushed in a full wine press until the wine runs over."

Joe 3:14 Thousands and thousands are in the Valley of Judgment. It is there that the day of the LORD will soon come.

Joe 3:15 The sun and the moon grow dark, and the stars no longer shine.

Joe 3:16 The LORD roars from Mount Zion; his voice thunders from Jerusalem; earth and sky tremble. But he will defend his people.

The Glorious Future of Judah

Joe 3:17 "Then, Israel, you will know that I am the LORD your God. I live on Zion, my sacred hill. Jerusalem will be a sacred city; foreigners will never conquer it again.

Joe 3:18 At that time the mountains will be covered with vineyards, and cattle will be found on every hill; there will be plenty of water for all of Judah. A stream will flow from the Temple of the LORD, and it will water Acacia Valley.

Joe 3:19 "Egypt will become a desert, and Edom a ruined waste, because they attacked the land of Judah and killed its innocent people.

Joe 3:20 (20-21) I will avenge those who were killed; I will not spare the guilty. But Judah and Jerusalem will be inhabited forever, and I, the LORD, will live on Mount Zion."

Joel 3:1-21

Joel 3 – Judgment in the Valley of Decision

A. A warning to the nations.

1. (1-3) A promise to bring back scattered and mistreated Israel.

**"For behold, in those days and at that time,
When I bring back the captives of Judah and
Jerusalem,
I will also gather all nations,
And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;
And I will enter into judgment with them there
On account of My people, My heritage Israel,
Whom they have scattered among the nations;
They have also divided up My land.
They have cast lots for My people,
Have given a boy as payment for a harlot,
And sold a girl for wine, that they may drink."**

a. **In those days and at that time:** Joel's prophecy still concerns the time period connected with *it shall come to pass afterward* mentioned in Joe 2:28. This is the broad period of the Last Days, initiated by the Ascension of Jesus and the birth of the Church on the Day of Pentecost.

i. Many have the wrong idea of the "last days," thinking only in terms of the final years or months immediately before the return of Jesus in glory to this

earth, or the rapture of the Church. Scripturally, we can think of the last days as an *era*, one that began with the birth of the Church on the Day of Pentecost. Since that time, the Church has not been rushing towards a distant edge that represents the consummation of all things. Instead, at the Day of Pentecost the Church came to the edge – and has run parallel to the brink for some 2,000 years.

b. When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem: In a lesser, immediate sense this was fulfilled in the return from the Babylonian exile. In the greater, ultimate sense it will be fulfilled in the end-times regathering of Israel, to the point where an expectant Israel welcomes Jesus saying, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” (Mat 23:39) and salvation comes to Israel as a whole (Rom 11:26-27).

c. I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat: Joel here describes the final gather of the nations in rebellion against God at the Battle of Armageddon (Rev 16:12-16). There is no place in Israel known as the **Valley of Jehoshaphat** but the name **Jehoshaphat** means, “The Lord Judges.” It describes God’s place of judgment.

i. “There is no such valley in the land of Judea; and hence the name must be *symbolical*. It signifies the *judgment of God, or Jehovah judgeth.*” (Clarke)

ii. This is a judgment of **all nations**. Joel was written at a time when a terrible plague of locusts brought the judgment of God upon the people of God. At a time like that, it is easy to think “God, You are dealing harshly with us, but what about the ungodly nations? We may be bad, but they are worse. Don’t you care about them?” God used Joel 3 to assure His people that the **nations** will be dealt with.

d. **I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people:** God's complaint against the nations is that they have mistreated His **people**. Primarily, this has in view the way the nations treat Israel, but also extends to how the nations treat the Church. When God's people are mistreated, God takes it personally and will avenge it.

i. In the judgment of the nations Jesus described in Mat 25:31-46, the criteria is not faith in Jesus Christ but how the nations have treated the people of Israel – the *brethren* of Jesus. Held on the earth after His return in glory, this judgment determines who is allowed to enter into the Millennial Earth, and who goes straight to judgment.

ii. **They have cast lots for My people:** It is bad enough for man to regard any human life as cheap; it is worse to regard the **people** of God as cheap. God remembers and will repay.

2. (4-8) *God warns the nations that He will retaliate against those who have mistreated His people.*

**“Indeed, what have you to do with Me,
O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia?
Will you retaliate against Me?
But if you retaliate against Me,
Swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation
upon your own head;
Because you have taken My silver and My gold,
And have carried into your temples My prized
possessions.
Also the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem
You have sold to the Greeks,
That you may remove them far from their borders.
Behold, I will raise them
Out of the place to which you have sold them,**

**And will return your retaliation upon your own head.
I will sell your sons and your daughters
Into the hand of the people of Judah,
And they will sell them to the Sabeans,
To a people far off;
For the LORD has spoken."**

a. **Will you retaliate against Me?** God virtually challenges the nations to come against Him or His people. He vows to **return your retaliation upon your own head** to those who come against Him or His people.

i. Judgment is about the only aspect of God's plan of the ages that is plainly logical. The grace and mercy of God is not plainly logical. Salvation by grace through faith is not plainly logical. The high standing and destiny of the believer in Jesus is not plainly logical. Judgment - God simply giving those who reject Him what they deserve - *is plainly logical*. It is as if God says to the wicked, "You rejected the saving logic of heaven, so I will give you the plain logic of earth: you will receive what you deserve before the holy court of My justice."

b. **I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the people of Judah:** The nations treated God's people with contempt, and had no sense of their worth. Therefore, God will repay them with the contempt they put upon His people, vowing to **return your retaliation upon your own head**.

i. Trapp details the horrors that befell the ten Emperors of the Roman Empire that persecuted Christians:

- Nero lost 30,000 of his subjects by pestilence, had his armies utterly defeated in Britain, suffered a revolution in Armenia, and was so hated by the senators of Rome that they forced him to kill himself.

- Domitian was butchered by his own soldiers.
 - Trajan died of a foul disease.
 - Severus died miserably on a military campaign in Britain.
 - Maximus was cut in pieces, together with his own son.
 - Decius died as an exile in a far country.
 - Valerian was whipped to death by the King of Persia who captured him.
 - Aurelian was killed by his own soldiers.
 - Dioclesian poisoned himself.
 - Maximum hanged himself.
- ii. "Ye cannot tread upon the least toe in Christ's mystical body, but the head cries out from heaven, Why hurtest thou me?" (Trapp) Paul found this out on the road to Damascus, when Jesus asked him *Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?* (Act 9:4)

B. A proclamation to the nations.

1. (9-13) Gathering the nations for a war of judgment.

Proclaim this among the nations:

"Prepare for war!

Wake up the mighty men,

Let all the men of war draw near,

Let them come up.

Beat your plowshares into swords

And your pruning hooks into spears;

Let the weak say, 'I am strong.'"

Assemble and come, all you nations,

And gather together all around.

Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O LORD.

"Let the nations be awakened, and come up to the

Valley of Jehoshaphat;

For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.

Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.

Come, go down;

For the winepress is full,

The vats overflow;

For their wickedness is great."

a. **Prepare for war!** God challenged the nations to **prepare for war** against Him. They will one day do this exact thing (Rev 16:12-16), but God will simply laugh at the puny and futile preparations by the nations (Psalms 2).

i. **Beat your plowshares into swords:** If you are going to go into battle against God, you should have every weapon available. You should also practice your best positive thinking: **let the weak say, "I am strong."** Nevertheless, the most positive attitude can't work when man sets himself against His Maker. There was a Broadway play titled "Your Arms are Too Short to Box with God." This is what the nations don't know but will learn the hard way.

b. **I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations:** Though the nations will come against God and His Messiah with every weapon and the most positive frame of mind, it is all for nothing. They will be plucked like a ripe harvest and crushed in judgment.

ii. Psalms 2 beautifully expresses the folly of the nations and the triumph of the LORD: *Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us." He who sits in the*

heavens shall laugh; the LORD shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: "Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion" (Psa 2:1-6).

c. **Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full:** Rev 14:14-20 also uses this image of the winepress of the wrath of God to describe Jesus' judgment on the nations at Armageddon.

2. (14-17) *The Day of the LORD in the valley of decision.*

**Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!
For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.**

**The sun and moon will grow dark,
And the stars will diminish their brightness.
The LORD also will roar from Zion,
And utter His voice from Jerusalem;
The heavens and earth will shake;
But the LORD will be a shelter for His people,
And the strength of the children of Israel.
"So you shall know that I am the LORD your God,
Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain.
Then Jerusalem shall be holy,
And no aliens shall ever pass through her again."**

a. **Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!**
Joel looked out upon the Valley of Jehoshaphat at the Battle of Armageddon, and sees **multitudes** facing their eternal fate – truly, it is a **valley of decision**, and those who fight against the LORD and His Messiah are in the wrong place in the **valley of decision**, ultimately fulfilled at the Battle of Armageddon.

i. The idea of the "Valley of Decision" has been used in countless evangelistic meetings to show people that

they stand in the “Valley of Decision,” and must decide for or against Jesus. Joel’s context is exactly the opposite. Man does indeed stand in the **valley of decision**, but it is God who does the deciding, not man. It is a valley of judgment – and we should decide for Jesus right now so we never stand in this **valley of decision**.

b. **The heavens and earth will shake:** Joel goes back to the descriptions of cosmic cataclysm that were mentioned in Joe 2:30-31. In the midst of it all, **the LORD will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel**, and He will restore both His people and His city to glory.

3. (18-21) *Blessing on God’s people, desolation for the nations.*

**And it will come to pass in that day
That the mountains shall drip with new wine,
The hills shall flow with milk,
And all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water;
A fountain shall flow from the house of the LORD
And water the Valley of Acacias.
“Egypt shall be a desolation,
And Edom a desolate wilderness,
Because of violence against the people of Judah,
For they have shed innocent blood in their land.
But Judah shall abide forever,
And Jerusalem from generation to generation.
For I will acquit them of the guilt of bloodshed, whom
I had not acquitted;
For the LORD dwells in Zion.”**

a. **The mountains shall drip with new wine... all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water:** After God’s final victory, there is lasting abundance and the

days of drought are just a distant memory. Instead, **Egypt shall be a desolation**, along with the other enemies of the LORD and His people.

i. **A fountain shall flow from the house of the LORD**: Ezekiel 47 describes waters flowing **from the house of the LORD** in the time after Jesus' triumphant return, in the Millennium. Zec 14:8 also speaks of a great flow of water from Jerusalem, emptying both into the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

ii. The **Valley of Acacias** (Valley of Shittim) was a place associated with both failure and victory. It is located on the eastern side of the Jordan River, to the north of the Dead Sea. It was where the King of Moab sent his young women to the men of Israel to seduce them into idolatry and sexual immorality (Num 25:1-3). It was also the launching place for the armies of Israel when they set out against Jericho and Canaan in the days of Joshua (Jos 2:1; Jos 3:1). When water **from the house of the LORD** flows down to **the valley of Acacias**, then God's grace and provision covers the past - every sin, every victory is covered over by Him.

b. **But Judah shall abide forever... for the LORD dwells in Zion**: God will show mercy to His people and grant them forgiveness. This prophecy of Joel, which began with the desperate plague of locusts, ends with a promise of restoration and redemption.

i. "This is the last promise, but not the least. It referreth, saith Danaeus, to Christ taking our flesh, by which he dwelt among us being God manifest in the flesh... since he dwelleth with his Church for ever, as it is in the precedent verse, and maketh her a true

Jehovah Shammah, as she is called Eze 48:35.”
(Trapp)

ii. “This prophet, who has many things similar to Ezekiel, ends his prophecy in nearly the same way: *Ezekiel* says of the glory of the Church, *Yehovah shammah*, THE LORD IS THERE. *Joel* says, *Yehovah shochan betsiyon*, THE LORD DWELLETH IN ZION. Both point out the continued indwelling of Christ among his people.” (Clarke)